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# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY

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VOLUME XXV

NOVEMBER 1919

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NUMBER 3

## SOME STRUCTURAL MATERIAL FOR THE IDEA "DEMOCRACY"

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### INTRODUCTION

At the joint session of the Economic and Sociological societies in Minneapolis, December, 1913, the present writer delivered the presidential address of the latter society on the subject "A Vision of Social Efficiency." The speaker frankly confessed:

I shall take the liberty this evening of throwing science to the winds, and of installing imagination in its place. I do not call what I am to say *Sociology*. It is that better type of thing than can be produced by any strictly cognitive process whatever. It is the composite outlook upon life projected upon the background of the thinker's total knowledge, with the assistance of all the intellectual processes at his command, but at last frankly toned and colored by his own personal estimate of all the values involved. . . . Without committing sociology or the American Sociological Society to the slightest responsibility for what I am saying, I shall allow myself the luxury of sketching the picture of a relatively rational society which my own judgment projects. As a vanishing point for the picture, let us suppose that the occupants of the cabin of the "Mayflower," when the famous pact was drawn and signed, were not the historical company, but the present members of the American Sociological Society. Suppose further that by some preternatural discernment these adventurers were able to bring before their view our present national domain, with its present population, its present technical equipment, its present

accumulations of wealth, its present scientific methods and results, yet without an inkling of the present political and economic organization, or of the social stratification. Let us suppose also that the company had not the Pilgrims' type of social consciousness but ours . . . with our present criteria of social values as our standard, what would be our idea of the quality of relations fit to form the social framework of the millions who should succeed to these national resources, and accomplish the aggregate results that are visible to us today?<sup>1</sup>

During that same academic year, 1913-14, the present writer was conducting a seminar on the subject "The United States Considered as a 'Problem-Situation.'" In the course of that study he expanded six of the less obvious propositions out of the fifteen which made up the framework of his "vision."

Meanwhile there has occurred what has occurred. Never before have so many people as today, all over the world, been engaged simultaneously in trying to work out or to think out utopias. In the United States the most frequent name for the heterogeneous types of utopias in different peoples' thoughts is *Democracy*. What arrangements is it conceivable that Americans can unite upon as the plans and specifications that will come the nearest possible in the next future to satisfying their conceptions of *Democracy*?

The following pages reproduce the seminar notes just mentioned. They are printed just as they were written up to June 14, 1914. They were intended at the time of writing as contributions to the answer to the question just proposed. The writer hopes that in some respects their value will be enhanced by the fact that in other respects they are out of date. They represent a sort of calm which was possible before our minds were disturbed by war-shock, possibly a stability of mental adjustment which we may not soon recover.

#### THE CONSTRUCTIVE TASK OF SOCIETY

After a generation of attention to abstract sociology, it is surely not precipitate if the sociologists begin to indicate some of the lines of action which the implications of the social process, as they have so far made it out, seem to demand.

<sup>1</sup> *American Journal of Sociology*, XIX, 433; and *Proceedings of the American Sociological Society*, VIII.

As I have said, "If it were not commonplace, it would be astonishing that, after so many thousands of years of human history, we have no consensus as to why we are living at all."<sup>1</sup> The sociologists will have turned out to be a futile folk, if their work does not make powerfully for the formation of such a consensus. Analysis of the process of life, as it has gone forward so far, is by no means complete, but it has penetrated deep enough to yield some credible insights into the trend of the process. These insights are authentic guides to further pursuit of the process. It is in order for the sociologists to interpret these insights in such a way that they will become actual social forces, and will acquire recognized influence in shaping the controlling policies of society.

That is, materials for a distinctly modern view of life have been delivered to the present generation by the practical and the scientific experiences of the past century, and particularly of the past half-century. No one is more naturally indicated to take the lead in organizing these materials for general use in shaping general ideals and purposes and policies, than the social scientists. In plain words, the common-sense business of every man who can think about social relations is to join with every similar man in asking the question, What is the best we have found out about the meaning of life, and what does it show us about the wisest policies in carrying on the life of society?

It is now more than thirty years since Lester F. Ward, speaking as a physical scientist, an evolutionist, with his whole scientific interest converging upon social problems, puzzled the few people who heard of his book by the confident way in which he rung the changes upon the theme that we are about to emerge from the stage of *unconscious* progress into the era of *artificial* progress. His meaning was, in brief, that hitherto very few individuals have tried to take knowledge of life in a large, connected way. On the whole, men have pursued relatively trivial purposes, with relatively little attention to remoter aspects of what they were doing, and especially to general tendencies produced by the sum of these uncorrelated actions. We are arriving at ability to perform social surveys, to understand social cause and effect, to see that the actions

<sup>1</sup> *Amer. Jour. of Sociol.*, XIX, 442.

of minor groups and of individuals are affected, for weal or woe, by the ways in which they work into the large scheme of action carried on by people in general. Common sense will accordingly force us more and more to take notice of all that experience has taught about social wisdom, and to lay plans accordingly.

In sociological language this is expressed in variations of the proposition that *social* consciousness is due for enlarging influence, as compared with irresponsible individual consciousness.

Since Ward first wrote, much has occurred in the way of verification of his prophecy. The thing which seemed so preposterous when he published it, now seems to many people a matter of course; and many more people who would not accept the abstract proposition have been falling into habits which are in line with his formulation.

On the basis of the partial survey which we have made of American conditions, nothing is more evident than that the underlying task of Americans in the immediate future is to develop an intelligent and efficient social consciousness. This judgment is affirmed, in one way or another, by everyone who has spoken of late for a progressivism of any sort that really rings true. Implied in all the more specific programs is a certain degree of perception that this general condition must be satisfied.

In what follows I am going to develop what seem to me elements of social knowledge, valuation, and purpose for which our present social experience vouches, and which present Americans may be credited with capacity to assimilate. To express it in another way, if we think of American life for a moment as a graded school, and of ourselves as a commission authorized to prescribe the curriculum for the grades that will be taking their schooling in the immediate future, among the things which belong next in the school curriculum are those now to be discussed. They are not obscure and subtle mysteries of highly specialized sociology. We may have to talk about them occasionally in academic terms, but the ideas themselves are breath and blood and food of better life for all the people. The essential task of our immediate future is to get these elementary social conceptions familiar in the minds of all the people as plain citizens. The individualistic outlook of our

ancestors found it expedient to make the three R's the substance of the common-school curriculum. They were supposed to constitute the technique of that career of each making his own fortune which was the earlier conception of the human lot. Our present conception of the human lot has so changed that we find a necessity for a grade of schooling after the three R's have been acquired. Somehow or other it will, on the one hand, presuppose all that science has learned which has a discoverable meaning for the human lot, and on the other hand, by virtue of that fact, it will indicate the program for which vital religion should furnish the most dependable motive.

By a *purely secular ethic*, I mean a conception of *ends* which are within the range of the visible career of men, and which are the most convincing correlation of the lesser and the larger purposes that are found to have a place in human life. This secular ethic need have no collisions with religious conceptions of what is larger and longer than human life, namely, with those transcendental conceptions in which mundane life is merely incidental; unless those religious conceptions assume an authority within mundane relations to displace positive knowledge and rational evaluations of the knowledge.

As I have said:

It looks to me altogether probable that men will one day be substantially agreed in this—that efficiency in living involves as a minimum the utmost correlation of human powers in endeavor after those concerted social achievements which prove by experience to do most toward placing physical resources at the disposal of all the world's people; and which at the same time do most toward inclining all the world's people so to use those resources that they may become progressively admirable people.<sup>1</sup>

This proposition illustrates what I mean by the phrase "a purely secular ethic"; that is, a comprehensive notion of what human experience is all about, what it is making for at its best, and how this conception of it, at the largest and best which we can discover in it, becomes a test, and a measure and a guide for all the conduct of life which is continually putting itself under judgment as promoting or retarding this largest conceivable best.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 442.

Life without such a controlling conception is sure to be confused at best. It may be chaotic and self-contradictory at worst. In sheer desperation for some ethical guide, men have over and over again accepted someone's guesswork, and have called it a *divine* guide.

It is not necessary in order to command their attention to convince relatively sophisticated modern men that one's correlating moral conception contains all that may ever be known, by beings human and superhuman, about super-mundane purposes; i.e., it is no longer necessary to get a working principle accepted as an *absolute truth* before its approximate value may be recognized. All that is necessary, as a basis for argument at least, is to satisfy the minds of modern men that the moral conception proposed as a principle of correlation and evaluation actually does furnish a means of grading moral values, of assigning positions of lesser and greater importance to all the competing interests and activities within knowable human experience.

The formula just used is the latest expression which I have been able to make of the scale of secular values which is most likely to convince modern men. With substantially this formula, we may plan our campaigns for social education in the larger sense, and for social improvement. We may go as directly about specific programs, based on this presupposition, as any of the older prophets did when their audience believed their fundamental "Thus saith the Lord!" We can say to the most materialistically minded man on the street, "Look here! You know in the back of your head that this is what life is for at last, and you know what makes toward it, and what makes against it!" He may not admit either member of the proposition, but the chances are he suspects that the former part is true, and he is obliged to admit the relevancy of any evidence we may assemble in support of the latter.

Whether individuals admit either the logic or the morals of this appeal, the logic of the social process ratifies both. There is an economy of human interests which resistlessly adjusts itself in accordance with this ethic. The victory has always come at last to the interest genuinely loyal to the purpose: that which does

most and best for the greatest number of human beings in the way of fixing the standard of human life for men in general. The only defeat which this purpose has ever sustained in the long run has been the victory in disguise of discovering by means of conflict a "more" and a "better" for human beings than the specific "most" and "best" over which the beginnings of the conflict were waged. Time after time, throughout the centuries, intrenched institutions, economic, political, social, and religious, have attempted to perpetuate themselves, after they had become injurious to the developing interests of human beings. Always the institutions have had to yield, and a freer, better secured, more highly developed human being has inherited the results of the conflict. One of the most timely contributions that could be made to social progress in the United States would be a series of popular reading books, covering the range of known human history, and telling the story of human experience in terms of this perception. One of the keenest critics of religious orthodoxy in the nineteenth century scandalized the conservatives by declaring, in connection with the dogma of "the fall of man"—"Yes, man has been continually falling, but every fall has been a fall upward." The element of truth in the remark is in the line of the perception expressed in the last paragraph. The course of human experience has been over a spiral track, and the variations from the main path of the spiral have been at tangents starting from almost every point, and reaching out long distances from the general direction of the human movement. This general direction has nevertheless been marked by steadily accumulating particulars in which human beings have arrived at more complete finding of themselves, and possession of themselves. Whether we have theories or not that something else might be the transcendental, or even the transcendent, reason for the visible human process, this self-realization of human beings is the most valuable outcome in sight. It is the thing toward which, so far as human insight has thus far been able to make out, "the whole creation moves." Until a larger vision brings into focus some superior value, as a measure of all possible casual values, this self-realization of persons will, must, and should stand in judgment as the measure of value for all human programs,



or, in a word, as our supreme working criterion of morals. The primary moral task of our civilization is to establish this conviction in the general conscience as securely as the alphabet and the multiplication table are established in the general intelligence.

A single concrete illustration may indicate the whole strategy of attack and defence which would be most probable in case of quarrel with our historical generalization. A demurrer might be filed in these terms: "The generalization is false, as shown by the instance of the American Negro. Ethical sentimentalists fought to improve his condition. The result was a change of his condition, but it was a change for the worse."

Suppose the facts were at this moment as alleged—and as to the matter of fact no expression of opinion is necessary for our purpose—the rejoinder, from the point of view indicated by our thesis, would be substantially this: The returns are not all in yet. It is too early to talk of "results," in this case, if we mean by "results" an accounting which may be accepted as closing the historical incident. To be sure, the case up to date has not turned out as anybody anticipated. Those enthusiasts in particular are disappointed who imagined that it would be a glorious consummation for the Negro, when he should literally "call no man master," and should have a ballot in his hand. Perhaps his condition sums up now as worse than it was under slavery. Perhaps, however, as a result of the alleged actual regress concealed under the formal progress alleged in the deceptive terms "emancipation" and "enfranchisement," he may presently reach a consummation of self-mastering and self-direction and self-realization. If this takes place, it will be the latest demonstration on a large scale of the logic of history generalized in the ethical principle in question.

Passing from the credentials of the principle, it is perhaps less evident, and it is perhaps a matter of anxiety to fewer people, that there is any actual antagonism in American society to the ethical principle as stated. Most social theorists appear to be under the impression that Americans of all sorts tacitly accept, as their ultimate social principle, substantially what is involved in the standard cited, namely, that which does most and best for the greatest number of human beings. In qualification of that view

I have more than once published my own opinion that capitalism is a diametrical contradiction of that standard, and I need not enlarge here on that phase of the question. Even if there were in our society no antagonism in principle to this ethical ideal, its weakness as an effective social factor would constitute the central moral problem of our society. I think it is worth while, however, to raise the question in passing and from another standpoint, whether we are not deceiving ourselves as to our actual ethical standards.

I put the problem in the form of a possible comparison with a state of mind half a century ago in England. Is there, in any part of the American mind, anything resembling the caste morality to which John Stuart Mill refers in his *Autobiography*, and in Volume I, Book IV, chapter vii, of the *Political Economy*?

In the former, Mill gives us some vivid hints about the cynicism of English society in general as to possible altruistic motives in human nature. These side lights occur especially in connection with his appreciations of Bentham's philosophy.

Mill had previously referred to himself and Comte as "sociologists." Referring to the period after 1843, and before the publication of his *Political Economy* in 1848, he refers to himself and Mrs. Taylor, afterward his wife, in this way:

We were now much less democratic than I had been, because so long as education continues to be so wretchedly imperfect, we dreaded the ignorance and especially the selfishness and brutality of the mass: but our ideal of ultimate improvement went far beyond Democracy, and would class us decidedly under the general designation of Socialists. While we repudiated with the greatest energy that tyranny of society over the individual which most socialistic systems are supposed to involve, we yet looked forward to a time when society will no longer be divided into the idle and the industrious, when the rule that they who do not work shall not eat, will be applied not to paupers only, but impartially to all; when the division of the produce of labor, instead of depending, as in so great a degree it now does, on the accident of birth, will be made by concert on an acknowledged principle of justice and when it will no longer either be, or be thought to be, impossible for human beings to exert themselves strenuously in procuring benefits which are not to be exclusively their own, but to be shared with the society they belong to.<sup>1</sup>

Mill says further:

In the *Principles of Political Economy* these opinions were promulgated, less clearly and fully in the first edition, rather more so in the second, and

<sup>1</sup>*Autobiography*, p. 149.

quite unequivocally in the third (1852). The difference arose partly from the change of times, the first edition having been written and sent to press before the French Revolution of 1848, after which the public mind became more open to the reception of novelties in opinion, and doctrines appeared moderate which would have been thought very startling a short time before.<sup>1</sup>

On page 152 Mill says that he treated political economy as a branch of social philosophy.

Speaking for Mrs. Taylor and for himself, Mill says:<sup>2</sup>

The social problem of the future we considered to be how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action with a common ownership in the raw material of the globe, and an equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labor. We had not the presumption to suppose that we could already foresee by what precise form of institutions these objects could most effectually be attained, or at how near or how distant a period they would become practicable. We saw clearly that to render any such social transformation either possible or desirable, an equivalent change of character must take place both in the uncultivated herd who now compose the laboring masses, and in the immense majority of their employers. Both these classes must learn by practise to labor and combine for generous, or at all events for public and social purposes, and not, as hitherto, solely for narrowly interested ones. But the capacity to do this has always existed in mankind, and is not, nor is ever likely to be, extinct. Education, habit, and the cultivation of the sentiments will make a common man dig or weave for his country as readily as fight for his country. True enough, it is only by slow degrees, and a system of culture prolonged through successive generations, that men in general can be brought up to this point. But the hindrance is not in the essential constitution of human nature. Interest in the common good is at present so weak a motive in the generality, not because it can never be otherwise, but because the mind is not accustomed to dwell on it as it dwells from morning till night on things which tend only to personal advantage. When called into activity, as only self-interest now is, by the daily course of life, and spurred from behind by the love of distinction and the fear of shame, it is capable of producing, even in common men, the most strenuous exertions as well as the most heroic sacrifices. The deep-rooted selfishness which forms the general character of the existing state of society is so deeply rooted only because the whole course of existing institutions tends to foster it; and modern institutions in some respects more than ancient, since the occasions on which the individual is called on to do anything for the public without receiving its pay, are far less frequent in modern life than in the smaller commonwealths of antiquity. These considerations did not make us overlook the folly of premature attempts to dispense with the inducement of private interest in social affairs, while no

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.*; written in 1861.

substitute for them has been or can be provided: but we regarded all existing institutions and social arrangements as being (in a phrase I once heard from Austin) "merely provisional," and we welcomed with the greatest pleasure and interest all socialistic experiments by select individuals (such as the co-operative societies) which, whether they succeeded or failed, could not but operate as a most useful education of those who took part in them, by cultivating their capacity of acting upon motives pointing directly to the general good, or making them aware of the defects which render them and others incapable of doing so.

A paragraph later (p. 151), speaking of the period during which he wrote his *Political Economy* (1845-47), Mill says:

In this period of little more than two years, there was an interval of six months during which the work was laid aside, while I was writing articles in the *Morning Chronicle* (which unexpectedly entered warmly into my purpose) urging the formation of peasant properties on the waste lands of Ireland. This was during the period of the Famine, the Winter of 1846-47, when the stern necessities of the time seemed to afford a chance of gaining attention for what appeared to me to be the only mode of combining relief to immediate destitution with permanent improvement of the social and economic condition of the Irish people.

But the idea was new and strange; there was no English precedent for such a proceeding; and the profound ignorance of English politicians and the English public concerning all social phenomena not generally met with in England (however common elsewhere) made my endeavors an entire failure. Instead of a great operation on the waste lands, and the conversion of cottiers into proprietors, Parliament passed a Poor Law for maintaining them as paupers; and if the nation has not since found itself in inextricable difficulties from the joint operation of the old evils and the quack remedy, it is indebted for its deliverance to that most unexpected and surprising fact, the depopulation of Ireland, commenced by famine and continued by emigration.

These reflections will serve to bring out the meaning of some of the direct and some of the indirect references made about a decade earlier in the famous chapter of the *Political Economy* on "The Probable Futurity of the Laboring Classes." Mill says (Vol. II, p. 342):

Considered in its moral and social aspect, the state of the laboring people has latterly been a subject of much more speculation and discussion than formerly; and the opinion that it is not now what it ought to be, has become very general. The suggestions which have been promulgated, and the controversies which have been excited on detached points rather than on the foundations of the subject, have put in evidence the existence of two

conflicting theories respecting the social position desirable for manual laborers. The one may be called the *theory of dependence and protection*, the other that of *self-dependence*.

According to the former theory, the lot of the poor, in all things which affect them collectively, should be regulated for them, not by them. They should not be required or encouraged to think for themselves, or give to their own reflection, or forecast an influential voice in the determination of their destiny. It is supposed to be the duty of the higher classes to think for them, and to take the responsibility of their lot, as the commander and officers of an army take that of the soldiers composing it. This function, it is contended, the higher classes should prepare themselves to perform conscientiously, and their whole demeanor should impress the poor with reliance on it, in order that, while yielding passive and active obedience to the rules prescribed for them, they may resign themselves in all other respects to a trustful *insouciance* and repose under the shadow of their protectors. The relation between rich and poor, according to this theory (a theory also applied to the relation between men and women), should be only partly authoritative; it should be amiable, moral and affectionate tutelage, on the one side, respectful and grateful deference on the other. The rich should be *in loco parentis* to the poor, guiding and restraining them like children. Of spontaneous action on their part there should be no need. They should be called on for nothing but to do their day's work, and to be moral and religious. Their morality and religion should be provided for them by their superiors, who should see them properly taught it, and should do all that is necessary to ensure their being, in return for labor and attachment, properly fed, clothed, housed, spiritually edified, and innocently amused.

This is the ideal of the future, in the minds of those whose dissatisfaction with the Present assumes the form of affection and regret towards the Past. Like other ideals, it exercises an unconscious influence on the opinions and sentiments of numbers who never consciously guide themselves by any ideal. It has also this in common with other ideals, that it has never been historically realized. It makes its appeal to our imaginative sympathies in the character of a restoration of the good times of our forefathers. But no times can be pointed out in which the higher classes of this or any other country performed a part even distantly resembling the one assigned to them in this theory. It is an idealization, grounded on the conduct and character of here and there an individual. All privileged and powerful classes, as such, have used their power in the interest of their own selfishness, and have indulged their self-importance in despising, and not lovingly caring for, those who were, in their estimation, degraded, by being under the necessity of working for their benefit. I do not affirm that what has always been must always be, or that human improvement has no tendency to correct the intensely selfish feelings engendered by power; but though the evil may be lessened, it cannot be eradicated until the power itself is withdrawn. This, at least, seems to me undeniable, that long before

the superior classes could be sufficiently improved to govern in the tutelary manner supposed, the inferior classes would be too much improved to be so governed.

I am quite sensible of all that is seductive in the picture of society which this theory presents. Though the facts of it have no prototype in the past, the feelings have. In *them* lies all that there is of reality in the conception. As the idea is essentially repulsive of a society only held together by the relations and feelings arising out of pecuniary interests, so there is something naturally attractive in a form of society abounding in strong personal attachments and disinterested self-devotion. Of such feelings it must be admitted that the relation of protector and protected has hitherto been the richest source. The strongest attachments of human beings in general are towards the things or the persons that stand between them and some dreaded evil. Hence in an age of lawless violence and insecurity, and general hardness and roughness of manners, in which life is beset with dangers and suffering at every step, to those who have neither a commanding position of their own, nor a claim on the protection of someone who has—a generous giving of protection, and grateful receiving of it, are the strongest ties which connect human beings; the feelings arising from that relation are their warmest feelings; all the enthusiasm and tenderness of the most sensitive natures gather round it; loyalty on the one part and chivalry on the other are principles exalted into passions. I do not desire to depreciate these qualities. The error lies in not perceiving that these virtues and sentiments, like the clanship and the hospitality of the wandering Arab, belong emphatically to a rude and imperfect state of the social union, and that the feelings between protector and protected, whether between kings and subjects, rich and poor, or men and women, can no longer have this beautiful and endearing character, where there are no longer any serious dangers from which to protect. What is there in the present state of society to make it natural that human beings of ordinary strength and courage should glow with the warmest gratitude and devotion in return for protection? The laws protect them wherever the laws do not criminally fail in their duty. To be under the power of some one, instead of being as formerly the sole condition of safety, is now, speaking generally, the only situation which exposes to grievous wrong. The so called protectors are now the only persons against whom, in any ordinary circumstances, protection is needed. The brutality and tyranny with which every police report is filled, are those of husbands to wives, of parents to children. That the law does not prevent these atrocities, that it is only now making a first timid attempt to repress and punish them, is no matter of necessity, but the deep disgrace of those by whom the laws are made and administered. No man or woman who either possesses or is able to earn an independent livelihood, requires any protection than that which the law could and ought to give. This being the case, it argues great ignorance of human nature to continue taking for granted that relations founded on protection must always

subsist, and not to see that the assumption of the part of protector, and of the power which belongs to it, without any of the necessities which justify it, must engender feelings opposite to loyalty.

Of the working men, at least in the more advanced countries of Europe, it may be pronounced certain, that the patriarchal or paternal system of government is one to which they will not again be subject. That question was decided, when they were taught to read and allowed access to newspapers and political tracts; when dissenting preachers were suffered to go among them, and appeal to their faculties and feelings in opposition to the creeds professed and countenanced by their superiors; when they were brought together in numbers, to work socially under the same roof; when railways enabled them to shift from place to place, and change their patrons and employers as easily as their coats; when they were encouraged to seek a share in the government, by means of the electoral franchise. The working classes have taken their interests into their own hands, and are perpetually showing that they think the interests of their employers not identical with their own, but opposite to them. Some among the higher classes flatter themselves that these tendencies may be contracted by moral and religious education; but they have let the time go by for giving an education which can serve their purpose. The principles of the Reformation had reached as low down in society as reading and writing, and the poor will not much longer accept morals and religion of other people's prescribing.

Returning, then, to the query raised above as to whether something different from a genuinely ethical preconception occupies the minds of so many Americans that it amounts to an arrest of social development, this must be said: There is surely a benumbing uncertainty in the minds of Americans about the scale of values to which their efforts should correspond. We are not at one with ourselves as to whether the goal of life is material and selfish or spiritual and social. From the poor wretches who would stoop to any infamy for money to the magnates of finance who would plunge the nations into war rather than sacrifice the interests of capital there is a sodden and sightless element in our society which does its part to keep us all from having a stimulating vision of the human enterprise. On the other hand, we have vague instincts of a paramount moral destiny. These instincts vary in expression from the bombastic and ambiguous quotation in advertisements of a five-cent cigar—"I am for men"—to the loftiest poetic and religious assertions of the incomparable value of humanity. There is no social guaranty worth trusting in a society which is not con-

vinced that the measure of meanness or merit in men's actions is what they import for human beings.

The first task of civilization is to secure food enough to sustain life. The next task is to make life worthy enough to be worth sustaining. The main lesson to be learned in our present grade of civilization is that our basic business is to develop efficiency in making better people of ourselves. This means not the production of a few self-conscious individualistic prigs, which was the utmost that could be hoped of the older types of morals. It means that we must learn to see ourselves as engaged in divisions of labor upon a common task, and that we must develop the controlling habit of judging and directing ourselves by the standard of loyalty in trying to make this common task successful.

We have one very literal example in the world of a national program for teaching this fundamental social lesson on a large scale. It is the German policy and practice of universal conscription for military duty. Other nations carry out the same policy with differences of detail. Whether the military application of the principle is valid or not is beside the present question. Each year the young men of military age are called to the colors. They are required to take the soldier's oath, and they enter upon three years of discipline in the idea that they especially and citizens generally are merely doing what belongs to them as members of the nation when they respond to requisitions by the community for service to the community.

The underlying idea of European military systems, at least the idealization relied on to support the policy, is genuinely ethical. It is the conception that the individual leads an abnormal life unless his powers are dedicated to the weal of society. The crudeness of a civilization may be measured by the margin between this standard and its ruling moral code. A short time before his death, February, 1914, General Joshua L. Chamberlain, "the hero of Little Round Top," was asked how he happened to leave his quiet life as a college professor to enlist in the army. His answer was, "There was no happening about it. My country called, and I simply answered with the best that was in me." A civilization is essentially barbarous until its members in general have that moral attitude.



The beginnings of a genuinely ethical conception of life are made with the achievement of a sense of responsibility to make one's talents count for what they are worth in a system of reciprocal services.

In so far as this rendering of ethics has been published at all in America, it has been mostly by the preachers and a few academic teachers. It can hardly be said to have made much impression on Americans at large as an everyday social standard to be taken seriously. The matter-of-course everyday program for Americans is "hustling for the main chance," and the "main chance" is very seldom first and foremost the chance to make one's self count for all one is worth in discharging some social function. "Hustling for the main chance" means working one's opportunities so as to get out of them all there is in them for one's self. A civilization with this motive as its driving force is merely moral chaos mitigated by perfunctory accommodations to order. If each man scamps his job whenever he can individually gain at the expense of the job, the total limitation of output in the society amounts to relative scarcity in place of relative abundance, relative inefficiency instead of relative efficiency. A genuine secular ethic is a principle of universal energizing up toward maximum capacity in the production of all sorts of values. The practical reflex of this principle is the program—*Every man making his own job contribute all it can toward the total result.*

So far is this outlook from setting a "social" problem in the United States that it is hard to find an American so poor in his own esteem as to do the idea the passing reverence of a sneer. As a *sociological* problem it reaches down underneath all our other tasks. It is almost impossible, as we shall see, to probe below the surface of any other social or sociological problem without finding that we are just beginning to get at its elements when we learn that it must be stated as a particular case of this general ethical problem. Quite in the line of Lester F. Ward's perception, that all other social forces are futile unless they are charged and recharged with that elementary knowledge which contains the motive energy of endeavor, is this version that society must halt, or deteriorate, or perish, if knowledge is lacking *that* society is, and *what* it is, and *how* and

*why* the individual must give it his allegiance on penalty of the abortion of his own interests. *As a sociological proposition, the initial problem of American civilization is how to fill all sorts and conditions of men with this knowledge of the ethical medium in which all relatively advanced progress lives, moves, and has its being. It is the problem of getting every range of life, from the humblest home and the commonest employment, to the largest economic, governmental, scientific, and religious operation, moving in response to this radical ethical impulse, the obligation to make one's self all that one can be made as a factor in the functioning of the whole.*

I shall now try to make this general outlook more specific by elaborating several of the fifteen main propositions in the paper already referred to, "A Vision of Social Efficiency." We may regard those fifteen propositions as titles of a bill of particulars under the proposition discussed above, viz., the underlying task of Americans in the immediate future is to develop an intelligent and efficient social consciousness.

Assuming then that we are still acting as a commission charged with shaping our national education, the task involves among other things the following practical curriculum:

1. We should presume that, as a matter of course, the enormous enterprise of utilizing this space and time, these material deposits and physical energies and moral opportunities is a community undertaking, an affair of co-operation in duties and copartnership in enjoyments, with the common interest always effectively paramount to minor aims.<sup>1</sup>

We have no record of thought which does not pay tribute to the fact that the human lot is an affair of co-operation. This tribute is both forced and voluntary. It is both conscious and unconscious. The reality has somehow made itself felt in spite of ingenious and recalcitrant efforts to invent the contrary. From the Code of Hammurabi (Babylon, 2287-2232 B.C.) to the latest revised statutes, some form of the fundamental law has been stereotyped between the lines, "men's fortunes are made or marred by one another." From Plato to Nietzsche the pendulum of theory has swung from the collectivistic to the atomistic extreme in conceptions of the human lot, but no one has been able to avoid final

<sup>1</sup> See *Amer. Jour. of Sociol.*, XIX, 435.

reckoning with the obdurate fact that human life has to be a program of co-operation between persons. Sometimes theorists have chosen to treat the situation flippantly or cynically. The Atlantic Ocean and the changes of the seasons have likewise furnished spurs to frivolity. They remain facts nevertheless. Mandeville was the Chesterton of the eighteenth century (1670-1733). Whatever he meant by his *Fable of the Bees* (*The Grumbling Hive, or Knaves Turned Honest*, 1705), under any interpretation it is a picture of social interdependences, and Maeterlinck, with the same theme, has not been able to get far from the same conclusion.

Our main proposition, viz., "We must learn to adjust ourselves to a conception of life which is avowedly and systematically ethical," has been accepted as a commonplace, and substantially in the sense indicated above, by the most influential German economists since 1872. This is the first cardinal difference between German and English economic theorists. The second practically co-ordinate difference between the two groups is in one sense a mere application of the first. Its importance is more evident if we consider it without reference to the more general ethical principle of which it is an expression. The German economists in 1872 deliberately repudiated the dogma *laissez faire* as a key to community policy. They adopted in its place the conception that life in society must be concerted, co-operative construction. The Germans were merely returning to immemorial German tradition when they made this profession of faith. They had spent more than a half-century trying to convince themselves that the British type of theoretical individualism was the beginning of wisdom. At length they returned from the husks to their father's house. Since that time they have shown very few signs of wavering in their loyalty to the community idea.

The Germans are not cited as authority, to prove the validity of the community conception. It has often been convenient, however, to have German experience at hand, as a check to the arrogance of individualistic dogmatism. If there had been on record no equally conspicuous case of national success on the collectivistic basis, it would have been much more difficult for men who were convinced of the shallowness of British liberalism

to assert themselves against its self-confident smugness. Germany is too big a fact to be sneered out of sociological argument. If England has prospered on a quasi-individualistic basis, which could not possibly have been thoroughgoing individualism in reality, Germany in the last half-century has prospered much more wonderfully, considering the handicap carried, while professing and practicing a policy which has often, in England and America, been denounced with the supposedly damning epithet "socialistic."

But in fact Great Britain is sufficient answer to British theory. Great Britain, professing the *laissez faire* creed and at the same time maintaining the "two nation standard" for her navy, should overtax the tensile strength of any sense of humor but the British. Whatever the policy of Great Britain has been, it has been the policy of Great Britain, not of an unorganized horde of individuals. *Laissez faire* and civilized nationality are utterly contradictory conceptions. No nation exists today except by virtue of collectivistic policies of some sort. The only practical alternative for nations is not between a community program and an individualistic program, but between a perfunctory, disguised, dissembled, inconsistent, unintelligent, and inefficient community program and a voluntary, conscious, avowed, coherent, scientific, and competent community program.

Civilization is a veneer, not a character, until the members of the society have settled with themselves that they have a community destiny, and that their highest well-being depends upon making the implications of that destiny their most conscientious study and the systematic object of their endeavor. Americans are no longer the cocksure individualists that they were in the rampageous Jacksonian days. On the other hand, they have not made up their minds to take the social reality for granted and to go frankly about learning what it indicates. In one of its aspects the present American attitude toward the community phase of life is a species of spinsterish prudery trying to ignore out of existence facts as vital as sex.

The indicated curriculum in practical sociology for Americans calls for foundation courses in the theory and practice of community action. Just at present the center of attention among school men is upon the subject of *vocational education*. As a matter of immediate

adaptation to urgent needs, this trend is an expression of instinctive opportunism; but so far as it succeeds it merely postpones the beginning of deliberate training for community co-operation, and substitutes a program of equipping individuals for more efficient competition in the half-conscious economic struggle. That is, "vocational training" is commendable in itself, but we have not begun to learn how to correlate the individual's vocational skill and ambition with conceptions and purposes related to the big social vocation of controlling the conditions that make for the multiplication of more admirable people. Colonel Parker and John Dewey have been prophets of this social vocation for elementary schools, and for all schools. It is questionable, however, whether the schools in any part of the United States do much more than they did a generation ago to socialize pupils. The program by which this may be accomplished will hardly be worked out by mere specialists in sociology, or even in the theory of education. It is hard to see how the elementary schools can become nurseries of socialization until actual socialization has progressed so far in the community at large, and particularly in the foremost agencies for socialization, family, school, church, and industry, that the schools can be supplied with teachers who are themselves storage batteries of social intelligence and social impulse. If a national superintendent of schools could have the power in the United States which is possessed by the head of public instruction in France, and if he should exert his influence to the uttermost to make the schools distributing centers of the community spirit, he could no more turn the present teachers into efficient molders of socialized pupils than, by ordering them to read the Bible and lead in prayer and religious hymns, he could transform them into successful evangelists. That is, there is not enough community spirit to go around, so as to count for much in a deliberate program of school discipline in socialization. There is only slightly more ground for assuming that the average holder of a high-school or normal-school certificate is qualified to be a disseminator of the community idea and spirit than there is for the same supposition in the case of the average farmer. At present the source of supply is below the level of the demand.

In other words, we have not in our educational system a combination of machinery by which we might reasonably expect to secure in a generation a stratum of intelligently and sympathetically socialized citizens. It is conceivable that our school machinery in the United States might be brought into such concerted operation that in thirty years everyone now five years old and under would be using simplified spelling, and that in consequence of the change most of the rest of the population would have come into line with the new practice. For the reason suggested, it is not conceivable that our schools could in any marked degree change the individualistic temper into the socialized temper in the course of the next generation. The impulses necessary to bring about such a change must spring from many sources, and the future alone can tell whether the schools can ever become centers of socialization to anything like the extent desired by Colonel Parker and Professor Dewey.

Meanwhile what are the alternatives? In confronting such a problem theorists are always strongly tempted to elaborate beautifully schematic counsels of perfection, exhibiting how successfully their logically coherent schemes would work, if they worked. No plausible program is in sight, however, for turning Americans into people controlled by an adequate conception of social community, and by corresponding loyalty to its implications. That is, no program can be suggested which might be operated systematically from any existing or possible center of control. The only convincing program is the experimental one of energizing the organs of social consciousness that have already been developed, and of reiterating the facts about the social reality so that they will become the mold for the thought and action of an increasing ratio of people.

The failures or successes of people are in part determined by the ill- or well-workings of the community in which they live and move and have their being. This theorem is in no conflict whatsoever with the equally true theorem that the failures or successes of human beings are in part determined by themselves alone. Both theorems are true, and both must always have their place and proportion in every responsible program for the ordering of life. Our

emphasis at present is on the factor in the life-problem represented by the proposition: *The ill- or well-workings of the community may defeat or support the best efforts of individuals.* Virtually, then, the ill- or well-working of the community is as constant and vital an element in the career of the individual as his own existence. The valid efficiency test of American life will have to give large importance to the question: To what extent are Americans paying attention to the well- or ill-workings of their social relations? To what extent are men from the farm to the White House concerned about the efficiency of the team work between themselves and those fellow-citizens with whom they most intimately function? How systematically and persistently are those Americans who are charged with the leadership of American thinking plying the public mind with repetitions of the primary lesson, that the beginning of all our weal or woe is the efficiency or the inefficiency of our co-operation all along the line in carrying on the big task of keeping the general standards and realizations of life on the upgrade?

Under the title "Henry Ford's Experiment in Good Will," *Everybody's Magazine* for April, 1914, has the following: "The Ford plant is keyed to a certain output. No one department can work faster than another and keep it up without throwing the whole shop out of tune." How many people in the Ford plant have realized, and how many people in the tens of thousands of other American industrial concerns in which the same relation is more or less visible have realized, that these cases in point are merely items in the same mighty moral economy which Emerson was looking at, from another angle, when he said, "No man can be heroic except in an heroic world"? How many Americans have realized that such detached glimpses into the verities of the human reality go with similar relations throughout the whole range of experience to make up the big truth, that no group can do anything at its best, unless the members, each at his own post, function up to the standard of the group expectations; and no individual can be and do his best unless the group in which his lot is cast furnishes him the co-operation that offers fair scope for his type of action? But this is actually the contribution that the last century has

made to moral discovery. A century ago the industrial world was thrilled by the news, "Steam will drive machinery!" A large part of the energy of the nineteenth century was spent acting on the hint contained in the announcement. We made machinery, and we set steam to driving it, and we not only turned out fabulous quantities of goods, but we incidentally revolutionized society.

Meanwhile, largely as a by-product of this process of utilizing steam, we have stumbled on the biggest story that has been published up to date (and few Americans have yet had a "nose for news" sharp enough to scent its front-page importance), viz., that life is necessarily, all along the line, an interdependent affair, and that the first principle of making the most of it is to look out for the maximum efficiency of all our co-operations with one another.

The *Chicago Tribune* for March 25, 1914, contained this editorial:

#### TO EASIER TASKS

Announcement is made that the National Civic Federation will henceforth direct its energy to an analysis of the shortcomings of agricultural industry in the United States. After the diagnosis has been made remedies will be devised to strengthen the farmer and upbuild the farm industry.

Back of this unpretentious announcement is considerable social tragedy and despair. The National Civic Federation for more than a decade has been endeavoring to solve the labor problem in this country or at least to bring it nearer a solution. Its favorite theory was that industrial peace would be had in the United States if capital and labor could be brought together to "talk things over," instead of fighting things out. A number of the labor leaders in this country agreed with the Civic Federation plan. Samuel Gompers became a member and John Mitchell even accepted a high official post in the Federation.

But all this was in vain. The working masses seem more than ever opposed to the "get together policy" advocated by the Civic Federation. John Mitchell has been forced by his union to resign not only from office, but even from membership in the federation. President Gompers and a few other labor leaders of the old school still retain their membership in the organization presided over by Seth Low and August Belmont. But the younger trade-union leaders deny that there is any "community of interests between capital and labor."

In turning its attention to agricultural conditions the Civic Federation is seeking "green fields and pastures new" with an old and far from cheerful heart.



Whether or not the facts are as stated, in the case either of the National Civic Federation or of the leaders of organized labor, is not a matter that affects the illustrative value of the situation to which the editorial refers. For a century, employers and their agents have turned the half-truth contained in the "industrial harmony" theory into an insult to the intelligence of employees, and an outrage to their sense of justice. As a statement of the economy of co-operation in turning out a product which all concerned want to create, the "industrial harmony" theory reflects literal truth. As a pretense that the same harmony of interests which assigns functions in production controls the scheme of distribution, the theory is a stupid or hypocritical lie. Whether wage-workers have thought this through or not, they feel it, and there will be no peace between them and employers until a genuine basis for harmony can be established. That is, the actual community of interests between the different parties in distribution must be discovered. This actual community of interests must be recognized by both parties as the standard of their distributive relations. Then it will be found that both production and distribution are factors in a larger harmony than the greedy little capitalistic travesty of harmony had ever suggested.

We come back then to the commonplace which should be to the twentieth century what the control of steam was to the nineteenth, viz., that men by acting as communities may add many cubits to their stature. To use a familiar word in an unfamiliar sense, men are by nature *communicants*. Next to the resources of physical nature—and indeed we do not yet know whether it will turn out to be second or first in importance—this destiny of self-realization as an incident of community realization is the most prolific human endowment. Translated into terms of our present conditions, the legendary command to the progenitors of our race—"Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth"—becomes this: Find out the things worth bringing to pass which can be brought to pass only when men act as members one of another, and energize your community relations to the degree that will be sufficient unto these achievements.

I have said that the twentieth century should be characterized by appropriation of this discovery. Perhaps that is too optimistic.

Perhaps it will take all of the twentieth century and more to get this news item into all the newspapers. Perhaps it will take further centuries to get very much corresponding action. I do not believe the rate of the social movement is to be as slow as that. Nevertheless, one would risk very little in giving bonds to find in almost any assembly of Americans, from a ward caucus or a trade-union local to the national convention of a religious denomination, or the Congress of the United States, a majority who show relatively as little understanding of the promise and potency of social co-operation as similar types had demonstrated about the powers of electricity, at the time when Franklin was flying his kite.

About 1875 Spencer and Schäffle made the first impressive attempts to give scientific expression to this community reality. Their renderings were amplifications of the formula "Society is an organism." Only here and there a scholar greeted these innovations with anything more respectful than decently veiled contempt. The rule was supercilious indifference or vulgar misrepresentation. Today the essentials in the community rendering of the human lot are perfunctorily admitted by the majority of scholars in the social sciences, but in England and the United States only a few have admitted that this community reality must dictate to social science a complete change of front from the formations which have thus far been occupied. Whether scholars in the social sciences, or leaders in popular social movements, are to become the effective leaders in developing a social consciousness corresponding with the objective community reality, remains to be seen. Meanwhile the advance in general intelligence which must be accomplished before the conditions will be present for the next indicated social reconstruction, may be expressed in this way: It must become as commonplace for men in all the relations of life to connect up their actions in thought with the community relationships in which they are involved, either as causes or effects, as it is for all sorts of men to reckon with electrical energy to the extent of turning a button, or taking down a receiver. At the same time, it must become as commonplace with all sorts of men to put themselves into the co-operative adjustments with their associates which these community relationships indicate, as it now is for

everyone to accomplish his short-distance locomotion through the aid of a trolley.

If social achievement worked out strictly in accordance with rational logic, no progress could be made until these preliminary conditions had been satisfied. Fortunately or unfortunately, the social process is not parallel with the syllogistic process. Things which are logical consequents often appear long in advance of things which are logical antecedents. For example, a large part of the humanitarian legislation in England and the United States during the past century directly contradicted the principles of political philosophy which were supposed to be in control. In fact, human experience and social doctrines are far more experimental and inductive than we admit. We no sooner arrive at a generalization, and resolve that it shall henceforth have dominion over us, than we leave it in solitary state, except upon ceremonial occasions, and busy ourselves finding out how well we can get along regardless of the sanctified presupposition. It is not till we get back to the presupposition, or some substitute, by way of the ratification derived from our vagrant experiments, that it has its securest tenure of office, and its maximum efficiency. Americans, along with the rest of civilized people, are trying ten thousand experiments in co-operation, while most Americans are still paying such vows as they pay anywhere before the altar of individualism. The grade of schooling which Americans are now going through is an adventure by Baal worshipers in finding out that it is not their Baal which has produced the results. They have been giving the glory to individualism. The efficiency has been predominantly that of a community. Everyone who is intelligent enough to value systematization of the results of experience and the capitalization of those results as co-ordinators of conduct, must recognize that the chief function of this grade of social schooling will be whatever it can accomplish in the way of lodging this community idea among the permanent elements in the general consciousness.

It would be futile to prophesy what the record of Americans will be during their next stage of social schooling. They may not get a "passing mark." They may fail of promotion to the next grade till they have lagged long beyond the normal period for

acquiring beggarly elements. The social achievement that must be realized, however, as our next step ahead is heightened consciousness of our dependence upon one another. To put it the other way, we cannot achieve our next stage of prosperity unless we realize on our assets as potential co-operators. From the housemaid who wastes more than her wages, and regards it as something to her credit that she is heedless of her employer's interests, to the congressman who steers his course by calculation of "what there is in it" for himself, the outlook must somehow be gained that this is not the way to make the most out of life. In order to be in the way of accomplishing the big purpose of promoting the evolution of a cumulatively capable and capacious human type, each member of the community must arrive at the feeling that he is both making the most of his personal opportunities and counting most toward the general result, when he is making the functionings for which he is responsible as reliable and efficient as possible. The most important instruction-material, from kindergarten to Congress, for our present school curriculum, is specialized or generalized variations of the universal principle that in the long run we help ourselves best by helping one another.

Of course, the "self" presupposed in that generalization is a "self" developed far enough to have an inkling of interest in the whole human enterprise—a consciousness that the limits of one's interests are not reached when tolerable conditions exist in home or school or shop, but that one is successful or unsuccessful with the success or unsuccess of town and state and nation and civilization in general. Here then is what the Germans call a "cultural task"—a problem of living ourselves into appropriation of ranges of reality which in some respects make less appeal to Americans than to any other of the civilized nations. For those Americans who take their departure from formulation of sociological problems in the strict sense, this task is fundamental to all the rest. The primary sociological appeal to all people who influence the thinking of others must be: Throw the emphasis of untiring line-upon-line reiteration upon the fact that we do not see life sane or whole unless we see it as community life, and all its programs, from least to greatest, as wise or unwise in the degree in which they

aim to be programs of team work within the whole community enterprise.

In a word, Americans will not have passed the promotion tests for advancement into the next higher grade of social schooling until they have translated these primary sociological generalizations into the language and feeling and action of all sorts and conditions of men.

Continuing the fiction that we are taking counsel about the educational factors which are most essential in our American program of social schooling, the second aim to be realized in our national consciousness is ability to visualize life as an organization of physical means in the interest of moral ends.

As I have expressed it in the syllabus already referred to: Our maturest conclusion about our national enterprise is

that the innermost and ultimate meaning of the whole undertaking is not to be found in its mastery of physical conditions, but in its transmuting of this control of forces into realization of types of persons, surpassing one another, generation after generation, in progressive realization of completer physical and mental and moral attainments.<sup>1</sup>

This proposition considered as a term in definition of subjective attitude is of course merely a somewhat more particularized version of our general theorem that objectivity requires an ethical rendering of social relations; and also of the foregoing specification that the primary clause in our ethical version of life makes it a matter of intensive co-operation between each and all of the members of the community. On its objective side, this proposition advances a step in the direction of a concrete content for the formal ethical conception.

We cannot avoid reiteration of the substance of these propositions in everything that we say about the further specifications. Under the present head in particular, we are not only obliged to reiterate what has already been expressed in a more general way, but also virtually to repeat some of the most familiar axioms of all morality which is not essentially physical technique in disguise. That is, morality, properly considered, consists of relations of persons to persons, not of persons to things, still less of things to

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 438.

things. Whatever the *mores*, on the side of valuations or programs the *mores* in the strict sense are always orderings of the relations of persons to persons. This, irrespective of the basic question whether or not particular *mores* presuppose that persons have this or that place in the scale of ultimate values.

It is neither slanderous nor cynical to point out that Americans thus far have been not only individualists but materialists. When related to its historical setting, there is nothing more abnormal or discreditable in our original materialism than in our individualism. Each was the psychical reaction appropriate to the objective conditions of an initial stage of social evolution. Condemnation of either of these in its embryonic character is forbidden by the commonplaces of social experience. Condemnation of both is indicated if we find ourselves deliberately reaffirming them as permanent qualities and standards, after we have arrived at ability to form judgments of social desirability on the basis of critical analysis of social functions.

In the previous section we have said enough for the present about individualism. The sense in which the term materialism is here used is attention to the problems centering about acquisition and physical use of things, without commensurate attention to the superphysical achievements into which things may be transmuted.

It is hard to decide whether the greatest obstacles in the way of translating our controlling purposes into terms of genuinely human relations are encountered among the people who will profess with vehemence that they regard the proposition as a matter of course, or among those who will declare that the alternative does not exist; that it is a mere form of words; that people deceive themselves if they fancy that the words really say anything; that things must always have the place that they now have in human programs; and that to imagine anything else is to suppose that there can be shadows without substances to cast them. We shall have to deal with both of these attitudes as we go on.

In a word, our American materialism is, on the one hand, merely a specific case of the universal gravitation toward eventual appraisal of anything which has been worth attaining, as though it were worth treating as an end in itself, a permanent standard and goal of attainment, instead of a means to further ends which begin to

be discernible the moment such a measure of success is achieved in striving for the proximate end, that occasional intermission of attention to the proximate end is possible; and imagination is set free to turn toward wider prospects. That is, one of our mental propensities is, after the object of certain types of effort has been attained, to treat that attainment as an inhibition of further effort which might in any way transform the previous attainment. The logic of the social process in America, when carried out only so far, amounts to this false syllogism: We had to get control of nature's resources in order to live; therefore continuing to get control of nature's resources is all there is to life.

On the other hand, our American materialism is still a salient trait after every just concession is made to the different types of *spiritualism* blended into our national character. Of all the religious types that have had a part in the making of America, Puritan, Pilgrim, Catholic, Quaker, Anglican, Huguenot, Lutheran, Jewish, not one of any considerable quantity has been in practice a real antithesis with materialism. On the contrary, each of these has used its type of spirituality for two very loosely correlated purposes; first, to stimulate that sort of worldliness which I mean by materialism in the present sense; second, to induce a type of otherworldliness which did not in effect inhibit or even seriously embarrass materialism in practice. The only qualification of this proposition, which the facts demand, is that our religious beliefs have modified the direction of our pursuit of wealth. They have not inhibited the pursuit itself. They have done so much to stimulate thrift and prudence and calculation of material advantage, that religion is in effect indirectly responsible in part for valuations of material ends which none of the types of religious creed referred to above would directly indorse. Not to speak sarcastically, our historical Christianity has bravely striven to realize the unity of standard which was implicit in the apostolic ideal, "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit," i.e., the material and the spiritual factors in motive. Our historical Christianity has often succeeded in making the spiritual motive supreme in the case of individuals. It has never succeeded in making the spiritual motive sovereign in a civilization.

If there are apparent exceptions to this rule, as in the case of John Calvin's régime at Geneva, or that of Hildebrand at Rome, the necessary qualifications must of course be admitted. I am not convinced that even such cases as these are real exceptions. At all events the rule has been as I have stated it. The antithesis has not always been as sharp as at the present time between the directly materialistic and the purely spiritual motive. Some type of social *power*, only indirectly exalting wealth, has been the more obvious corrupting factor in the standards of institutionalized religion. The genuinely moralizing factor has always been a struggling minority interest since Christianity became a political force.

The actual dualism between religious materialism and religious spirituality is as visible from our present outlook in Plymouth, or in Massachusetts Bay, or in William Penn's City of Brotherly Love, as it is at this moment in Chicago. I repeat that I am not formulating this fact as an accusation. I am calling attention to it as an inevitable genetic phenomenon. From the desperate struggle for existence during the first years at Jamestown and Plymouth to the present moment, there has never been a time when a prudent American could say to his fellow-Americans: "We have no more need to cumber ourselves with further thought of material things." We are accordingly in the condition of arrested mental and moral development which corresponds with our physical limitations. Most Americans honestly believe it is visionary to suppose there is any place in the practical world for the conceit that material things are worth merely what they are worth as means to something not material.

Even those of us who have a secure position, so far as our own need of the necessities of life is concerned, rarely break away from the programs which were worked out in essentials by generations with whom desperate struggle for a livelihood was inevitable. The business of securing sufficient control of things to make us secure in the world has been so important with us that even those who have established the security are under the spell of the impression that the paramount value in life is persistence in the course by means of which this security was gained, instead of enterprise in



new courses which will tend to reveal what the security may be made to be worth.

American history up to the present time may be described as parallel with the career of a squatter in our Middle West whose life has been spent thus far getting his land under cultivation, and building a comfortable house in place of the shack that was his first shelter, and accumulating enough money so that he now feels "independent of the world." Many such men have at last become vaguely aware that they have not found out what to do in the world after they were independent of it, and some of them have died before their time from overwork or underwork because of their inexperience with anything but the work of their hands. America is divided between the great masses who from necessity, with a comparative few who from ignorance, are mastered by material things; and, on the other hand, the relatively small number who are trying to get a hearing for the proclamation that we are now able, if we had the will, to take control of material things in the interest of social and spiritual gains.

Again we must remind ourselves that this proposition which, to a few academic Americans, is virtually as commonplace as the Golden Rule, conveys to the typical American, academic or non-academic, little more meaning than so many detached violin or piano tones. We either treat it as men treat the buttons on the backs of their coats, viz., as good form, though for the life of us we could not tell why; or we treat it as hypocritical cant—something that no man in his senses would ever mean literally. Our present proposition is that any civilization, our own in particular, is still in an embryonic stage until it has appropriated this conception as one of its mainsprings of action. We are consequently wasting an undue proportion of energy aimed at social progress, which might be used to better purpose in accomplishing the primary grade of growth. Until we are able to picture with some degree of justness the preliminary and tributary character of wealth as a means to more significant ends, and until we are able to picture some of those ends as distinctly more worth our endeavor than wealth merely as a means to more wealth, or as a means to results which were better not attained at all, we shall be still semibarbarous. We shall be

cases of arrested development. Our life-process will have turned back on itself, reversed its engines, instead of making headway toward a worthy goal.

Up to the present time, then, the program of developing the sources of wealth has been the controlling factor in American civilization. Of course there are many Americans who would contradict this assertion. It would probably be impossible to assemble evidence enough to compel the more dogmatic of these to withdraw their contradiction. It would take us too far afield for our present argument to review the kinds of evidence which support the assertion. Instead of attempting that, let us throw an indirect light upon the proposition. Suppose all the voters of the United States who are members of churches should suddenly see in clear light the antithesis between the materialistic and the religious principle.<sup>1</sup> Suppose they came together in one party, with the platform: We will support the interests of people whenever they conflict with the interests of capital! If they meant what they said, and if they were fairly wise to what their meaning must involve, their organization would mark far and away the most drastic revolution since Cromwell.<sup>2</sup> Sooner or later Americans must observe a "decision day." We must come to an express understanding with ourselves as to whether we do or do not believe that persons are more valuable than things. We Americans must some day decisively accept or reject the creed that the uppermost visible reason for the continuance of society at all is the possibility and the purpose of making society a progression of improved relationships between higher-powered people. Meanwhile, those who see this ahead, and who are interested in shaping our socio-educational experience so as to satisfy the indications, can have no doubt that a phase of the mental and moral development next in order is expansion of ability to discern wherein we are now overvaluing wealth and undervaluing people.

<sup>1</sup> This group is chosen for illustration simply because all churches, of whatever creeds, are in principle committed to moral rather than material aims. If they graded up to relatively high intelligence and consistency they would be effective reformers of capitalism.

<sup>2</sup> One kind of social analysis through which this situation becomes visible is carried out in my paper, "The Social Gradations of Capital," *Amer. Jour. of Sociol.*, XIX (May, 1914), 721-52.

To prove this to ourselves would be very much like lifting ourselves over the stone wall by our bootstraps. We may, however, prepare ourselves to revalue some of our attitudes by contemplating certain aspects of ourselves about which no one is in doubt. For instance, suppose an American should declare publicly, as here and there one has, in effect: "I follow my occupation not for the money I can make, but for the good I can do." Comparatively few persons would recognize the alleged motive as conceivable and commendable. They would accept the profession at face value minus a certain discount to cover risks, only in case the profession were made by persons in certain exceptional occupations as the ministry, Y.M.C.A. work, settlement and various forms of charity work, certain kinds of nursing, certain kinds of teaching, and peculiar cases in other occupations. With these possible exceptions, the great majority would believe that a person who could make such a profession would have to be either a fraud or a fool. They would believe that the fools might be self-deceived about their motives, but that imagining themselves more interested in something else than in wealth is merely at best the unconscious hypocrisy of covering their inability to get into a money-making occupation by claiming to prefer employment with human good as its end. That is, very few of us believe that any person whatever, with actually free choice, would deliberately choose a non-lucrative occupation in preference to a lucrative one. We do not believe it would be sane to do so. To be sure, it may be claimed in extenuation that this does not necessarily prove our subordination of everything else to money, because money is an indispensable means to every other end.

That may be admitted, but neither does it follow that the other ends will take care of themselves, if we allow money-making to be our paramount concern. It may be that George Washington accomplished more for humanity by spending seven years without pay as the commander of the American army, than he could have achieved by staying at Mount Vernon raising tobacco and blockade-running it out of the country. It may be that Louis Agassiz contributed more to solid and durable values by sticking to his scientific research and teaching than he could have added by listening

to the appeals of publishers to write semi-scientific best-sellers. It may be that some of our great captains of industry would write their names larger in the scrolls of honorable fame if they would consume liberal portions of their dividends experimenting with more democratic organization of their business; and it may be that they are reserving for themselves conspicuous places in the list of the inadequate and incompetent and undiscerning by merely keeping up the grist of dividends for more capitalization to produce more dividends, in a futile series of things in the service of things, with the men consumed in the program merely incidental. That is, although a certain modicum of wealth is necessary if much beyond hand-to-mouth existence is to be assured, it by no means follows that pursuit of wealth beyond a certain modicum involves the transmuting of a rational proportion of the pecuniary results of the pursuit into other than more wealth values. The point is that, in our present state of mind, the one thing certain about our social programs is the high rate of probability that Americans of all sorts and conditions will turn from anything whatever for more money. As a civilization, we are so obsessed that we are an arrested development of power rationally to co-ordinate the means and the end values of wealth.

The concrete illustration last suggested may be carried out a little further. Suppose the owner of a large industry should reach this conclusion and publish it as the future policy of his business:

What we have done in the past in the way of developing a plant and a technique for operating it, and in accumulating the necessary working capital, is parallel with what a pioneer does in clearing land, and getting it under cultivation, and stocking it, and providing himself with the latest types of farm implements. He has made a raw-material-producing plant. He has had to subject himself and his family to hardships and privations in getting these results. What is the reasonable thing for him from this time on? To keep himself and his family slaving in the same fashion after they have secured the raw-material-producing machine as was necessary while they were in the midst of the struggle to create it? Obviously not. If the pioneer inclines that way, it simply shows that, in the hard primary process, he has become intellectually muscle bound, and is incapable of adapting himself to the very situation he has created. The program now indicated is operation of that raw-material-producing plant in such a way that it will become a better-human-quality-producing plant for himself and family. The farm should be regarded

as the family's assured material resources for endowment of the family's all-around life. The problem must be no longer the pioneer one: How much can be taken out of this family for the development of the farm? It must now be the advanced one: How much can be taken out of this farm for the development of the family? This family needs to diversify its interests. It needs time to look about and find out what men and women have made of themselves in the use of assured necessities of life. This family needs leisure to take thought and take occasion to follow out the leadings of thought about the different ways of making the material goods which it produces yield the most in the way of sustenance for its super-material wants. All this without neglecting to conserve the farm, without suspending its function of raw-material producing, without quitting the material service primarily of itself and secondarily of society; but with due emphasis on the fact that it is an abortion of the function to let it degenerate into a mere machine function. It is a human function. In discharging the function, persons are to find the primary means of achieving their personality. The function of raw-material producing must never, therefore, be allowed so to predominate that it actually absorbs the personality-producing function. Wheat and hogs may be the proximate aim of the farm, but a ratio must be found between the indicated output of wheat and hogs and the indicated expansion of personality. The problem is not to develop personality by suspending the production of wheat and hogs, but to develop personality by means of producing wheat and hogs. In a word it means changing the ratio of the material and the personal factors in the farm equation.

Speaking still for the owner of the industry, reflecting on the analogy between his business and the farmer's, but not now in the form of direct quotation: Suppose now the farmer should get it into his head that there is something besides the upkeep due to this farm itself as a return for its yield. Suppose he should get in the way of thinking that the improvements, consisting of clearing and drainage, and removal of weeds and stones, and supplying of fixtures and equipments, are entitled to be preferred creditors of the farm after the family had collected mere subsistence. Suppose he is so under the spell of this conception that he credits to the farm 6, 8, or 10 per cent of its annual yield; and instead of using that amount in developing his own personality, and that of his family, he sends it off to some distant point to support the process of employing more grubbers, to improve more land, for the purpose of producing more raw material, for the support of more grubbers in improving more land, and so on till the world is over-populated with grubbers, and there is no more

land to improve. Suppose that this process of levying tribute to the farm and its material attachments turns out to produce a breed of half-real men who impersonate these supposed claims of land and capital, who appropriate to themselves larger amounts of the wealth which passes through their hands between one farmer and another than the farmers retain for themselves. Suppose these middlemen frequently become priests of a vicarious and meretricious culture, developing a picturesque but poisonous personality, while the substantial producers remain in consequence stunted and aborted. Surely this outcome is not progress. It is reversion to something more ghastly than the cruder pagan superstitions. Every indication in the process points to the persons actually functioning as the preferred creditors of the process. The family operating the farm should surely have a first lien, not merely on enough of the products of the farm to keep them operating, but on enough of the products of the farm to enable them to exchange with the outside world their surplus of raw material, for means of sharing with the outside world all those personality-building products and discoveries which the raw material produced on the farm enables the outside world to accumulate.

Our hypothetical reflective owner again speaks for himself:

I will not allow my industry to duplicate that misdirected farm. I will make it parallel rather with the farm that is rationally subordinated to human purposes. My industry is a co-operation of many men in performing one of the services which civilized life requires. It is the reliance of most of those co-operators for assuring their participation in the advantages of civilization. It is their leverage on physical conditions in the human process of controlling the means of achieving personality. Our property institutions make it possible for me to abort that process in the case of most of these co-operators in my industry. I have the legal right to assume that there are claims of things which take precedence over all the functional claims of these co-operating persons, in excess of the wage appointed to them by operation of supply and demand in the present state of the market. That balance of power in the market makes it possible for me, as owner, to satisfy the market requirements in the way of a wage scale, and all other costs of production, including the market rate of wages to myself as manager, and to have a disposable surplus which I am at liberty to use as a sacrifice to that heathen deity capital. My copartners in production might use that surplus in a thousand ways in making themselves more complete men and women. I have the legal right in the name

of capital, and all the traditions of business command are to exert the right, to use that surplus in such a way that it will, negatively, veto the possibility of that gain on the part of my copartners, and that it will positively go to increase the number of underdeveloped persons kept at just the standard of life required to maintain the grade of routine efficiency demanded for creating another surplus, to be devoted to sustentation of similarly underdeveloped people, and so on *ad absurdum*. That legal right and that business tradition are simply latter-day deifications of things on the one hand and of the power of privileged persons on the other. I refuse to be a party to the perpetuation of that arrest of the moral process. Just as I should want the farmer to treat his farm, first, as a means of subsistence of himself and his family, second, as a means of supplying wants of others from surplus products of the farm, third, as a means of securing by exchange of that surplus the wherewithal to enrich his own and his family's personality, and consequently, fourth, as a means of articulating his family life and his farming functions with the whole moral process of society—so I am resolved to direct my industry toward the same end. I am resolved to make it, first, as efficient as possible towards its primary purpose of performing its specific part in the economic system. Thereupon, I am resolved, second, to make that industry go as far as it can in equipping all the persons working in it for achievement of the most fully rounded-out life of which they are capable. I am determined to make my business on its social side an experiment station in the ordering of moral relations among all concerned within the business, and between them and all the external groups with which the business has dealings. I have decided to do what I can, not merely to develop the productive technique of the business, but to develop competence in the different workers in the business to bear responsibility in control of the policies and conduct of the business, just as all adult males, with females doubtless to be included presently, in a republican state are supposed to share in the government of the state—that is, in the government of *themselves*—organized for the purpose of expressing and realizing the common purposes. I intend henceforth to abandon the idea that my duty, so far as my business is concerned, is ended when I have made it the biggest possible success as a producer of market values. From this time on I shall make it my chief duty, on the basis of that economic preliminary, to take the lead among the workers in my business, in trying to find out how that business may do the most to promote all the moral interests of all the persons connected with it. In other words, I propose to aim at becoming a practical moralist not only on the technical side of my business, but also on the personal side.

This extended hypothetical illustration is for the purpose of emphasizing what everybody knows, viz., that the captain of industry who should make such a declaration as this would be advertised as a menace throughout the business world. Most so-

called "practical" men would have no more respectful label for such a program than "rainbow-chasing." This is merely confessing judgment upon our charge that present Americans do not believe that the paramount and determining business of life is the realization of moral ends. We really believe that the paramount and determining business of life is to achieve control of material resources. We have moral ends in view somewhat in the same way in which our railroad managers allow aesthetic ends to enter into their calculations. Until recently none of them had given a thought to the effect of railroad building and operation upon the sightliness of the right of way or of the terminals. Earnings sufficient to maintain the plant and to pay interest on the bonds and dividends on the stock have been the limit of their outlook. Within recent years some railroad managers have done a great deal to reduce the hideousness of their lines. They have cleaned and sometimes terraced along the right of way. They have offered prizes to station agents for beautifying the station surroundings. They have made certain investments in horticulture, and have used the products to decorate dining-cars and to supply women passengers with acceptable samples of cut flowers. It is not at all in a fault-finding spirit that we express this work of supererogation as in the same category, so far as its fundamental philosophy goes, with concessions in party programs in accordance with the formula of the politician who betrayed more than he intended: "We must *pander* a little to the moral classes."

The main point is that few Americans have advanced beyond rating moral purposes as poor relations of material purposes. In the esteem of most Americans of the financially successful class it is a paradox and an insult to say that we shall remain barbarous until we have reduced our material purposes to the place of minions to our moral purposes. Instead of allowing our servants to hand over a few of the crumbs that fall from our business table to feed our moral needs, intelligent interpretation of human values will make our business activities in principle and in practice purveyors to our moral wants. We shall not have arrived at a tenable base of economic operations until we have so established our industries that we may proceed to transform them from their present provisional



character into their indicated function of supplying the necessary equipment for the satisfaction of our moral demands.

It is not to be expected that a solitary academic argument, or even a consensus of academic opinion, could make very much impression, directly and immediately, upon the prevailing ideas in American life. This is, however, nothing more than repetition of the commonplace that the academic factor is simply one among many factors in society. Of course a single factor, whatever its importance, must maintain a long struggle with all the other factors, even if it contains the promise and potency of ultimate primacy among them. The present stage of the struggle, however, calls less for conflict between academic and materialistic interests than between different types of academic interests, or at least between different types of intellectual interest. It is the chief function of the academic type of men to express the results toward which all moral experience points. If we cannot reach a consensus about these pointings, we shall be blind leaders of the blind whenever we attempt to influence standards or programs of social action. Even among academic men there is relatively little evidence of agreement that the main contention of the present section is valid. There is still less visible devotion among them to the purpose of fixing attention upon the instability of our present moral foundations. This does not mean that there is no social movement toward recognition of the paramount value of moral achievement. It shows merely that a class which thinks of itself as exercising intellectual and moral leadership is functioning in this matter far below its presumptions and pretensions. There is an inarticulate semiconscious social movement which is making for correction of the ratio between material and moral values in our civilization, far more directly and clearly and forcibly than it can formulate itself in general propositions. If the academic factor merely tags along in the rear of this more potent procession, the transition now in process will be no exception to the historic rule. What the pundits have been unable to see in advance, they will record and explain and justify and glorify after it has occurred. Perhaps they will even credit it to predecessors of their own type. What really took place probably was that men of more objective temper applied themselves to one concrete

situation after another, with the total result, after a long time, of transforming general conditions so that they amounted to the prevalence of new principles. It is incredible that men will forever consent to the supremacy of material over moral interests, except in the partial sense that the condition must precede the consequent. Returning to the generality to which we have appealed before, whatever turns out to be the variation of our social experience from the idealistic logical process of recognizing principles and proceeding to reconstruct conduct in accordance with them, academic men will abdicate their most timely function in the degree in which they fail to improve all sorts of occasion to call attention to the disparity between our American working-scale of values and the indicated demands of moral progress. There is no more important business, for men who are socially conscious, than to propagate consciousness that our present stage of social evolution is a process of inverting the ratio between the means-value and the end-value of the material and the moral in our social standards.

[*To be continued*]